

FIREFIGHTER SELECTION PROCESS

**An informational guide
for candidates interested in the
2012 Firefighter Recruitment**



**City of Santa Clara
Human Resources Department**

*The information contained herein is subject to change and does not constitute either an expressed or implied contract.
Revised January 12, 2012*

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OVERVIEW

This guide is designed for individuals interested in pursuing a career as a Firefighter with the Santa Clara Fire Department. The official Job Announcement for Firefighter can be found online at www.santaclaraca.gov starting January 17, 2012.

Candidates are advised to carefully review this guide in addition to the official Firefighter Job Announcement, paying particular attention to the minimum qualifications and the selection process timeline. Please submit an Employment Application and Supplemental Application only if you meet the minimum qualifications for this position.

Below is the tentative timeline for the 2012 Firefighter selection process (additional details on the individual steps of the process are provided in this guide):

FIREFIGHTER SELECTION PROCESS	
COMPONENT	TENTATIVE DATES
Job Advertised	Monday, January 9, 2012 - Thursday, January 19, 2012
Application Packets Due <i>Application packets will not be accepted prior to Tuesday, January 17, 2012 (8am) or after Thursday, January 19, 2012 (4pm).</i>	Tuesday, January 17 (8am) – Thursday, January 19, 2012 (4 pm)
Written Examination <i>Weighted Pass/Fail</i>	Friday, February 3, 2012 (evening) or Saturday, February 4, 2012 (morning) <i>No rescheduling will be allowed</i>
Oral Examination #1 ** <i>Weighted Pass/Fail</i>	Week of February 27, 2012 (tentative)
Oral Examination #2 ** <i>Weighted 100% (Paramedic Interviews will also be conducted)</i>	Week of March 12, 2012 (tentative)
Performance (Physical Ability) Examination ** <i>Weighted Pass/Fail</i>	Begins weekend of March 24, 2012 (tentative)
Departmental Interviews Chief's Oral Interviews	Week of April 16, 2012 (tentative)
Background investigation, polygraph, medical examination, and drug screening	After conditional offer of employment extended
Firefighter Academy	June 2012 (approx. 10 – 12 weeks)

** The Oral #1 and #2 Examinations and Performance (Physical Ability) Examination will be conducted between the hours of 8:00 am – 5:00 pm in Santa Clara. The number of days will depend on the number of candidates being invited to the examinations.

THE POSITION

Firefighting involves extremely difficult and dangerous physical work, often involving emergency and life-or-death situations. The physical and mental demands of the job are considerable and the selection process is challenging. The Santa Clara Fire Department is a paramilitary organization with a clearly defined chain of command that must be followed. All personnel must adhere to established standards regarding personal conduct and grooming. Adherence to discipline is a mandatory responsibility of each member of the Santa Clara Fire Department.

Once hired into the position, a Firefighter will be assigned to an extensive Firefighter Academy to learn the basic skills necessary to perform the job. After graduating from the Academy, the typical work schedule for a Santa Clara Firefighter consists of 24-hour shifts, averaging 56 hours per week. In the span of 24 calendar days, a Firefighter will work eight 24-hour shifts.

Upon graduation from the Academy, each Firefighter will be assigned to a company for a three-month interval. During this time, probationary Firefighters continue to receive training from the Department and are expected to study on their own. During Department drills, each Firefighter is expected to pay attention, observe the techniques being demonstrated, participate actively, and ask questions. There are defined study and drill requirements that must be met; a formal evaluation will be conducted each month by the Company Officer. After the initial three-month period, the probationary Firefighter will be assigned to another company for three-month intervals during the probationary period. The Training Division will also monitor the progress and skill level of each probationary Firefighter with periodic testing that will take the form of written, manipulative and oral examinations. It is expected that a probationary Firefighter will successfully pass all of these examinations.

New Firefighters must successfully complete the 12-month probationary period to be considered for permanent appointment to the position.

The complete job description, salary schedule, summary of benefits, and Memorandum of Understanding for this position can be found online at <http://santaclaraca.gov/index.aspx?page=705>.

Qualifications

To participate in the selection process, interested candidates must meet all of the following requirements at time of application:

- ☐ Graduation from high school or equivalent
- ☐ At least 21 years of age (Must be born on or before January 19, 1991)
- ☐ A valid California driver's license
- ☐ A California Emergency Medical Technician – I (EMT-I) certificate in good standing
- ☐ Candidates interested in paramedic assignments must also possess a valid California or National Registry Emergency Medical Technician – Paramedic (EMT-P) license (not a requirement for the position of Firefighter)

THE SELECTION PROCESS

Application Packets Accepted: Tuesday, January 17 (8am) – Thursday, January 19, 2012 (4pm)

All individuals interested in applying for the position of Firefighter should first review the qualifications. Candidates who meet these qualifications must submit a completed City of Santa Clara Employment Application, Firefighter Supplemental Application, and any certifications on-line at www.santaclaraca.gov or to the **City of Santa Clara Human Resources Department**, located at City Hall, West Wing – Lower Level, 1500 Warburton Avenue, Santa Clara, CA 95050. Candidates must submit their application materials between Tuesday, January 17 (8:00 am) – Thursday, January 19, 2012 (4:00 pm). Applications may be submitted electronically through the City's website at www.santaclaraca.gov, by fax to 408-247-5627, or in person or by mail to the Human Resources Department. Attachments and additional materials (resumes, cover letters, or other documentation) submitted will not be reviewed. Candidates will be disqualified if they do not meet the minimum qualifications or if they submit a late or incomplete application packet.

All applications will be screened to ensure candidates meet the minimum qualifications. If that number is approximately 500, all qualified candidates will be invited to take the written examination. If the pool of candidates is larger than 500, the supplemental application will be used to further screen the candidates and a randomized lottery may be used to limit the applicant pool to approximately 500 qualified candidates.

Preference Points:

To qualify for Preference Points, proof must be submitted by the application packet final filing date and time. For **Santa Clara Volunteer/Reserve Firefighter's Preference Points**, applicants must submit proof of eligibility, as specified in Section 2.20 of the City of Santa Clara Civil Service Rules and Regulations. For **Veteran's Preference Points**, applicants who have separated from military service (Active Duty Status) must submit proof of honorable discharge (Form DD214) as specified in Section 2.22 of the City of Santa Clara Civil Service Rules and Regulations. The Civil Service Rules and Regulations are available online at:

<http://santaclaraca.gov/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=750>

Written Examination: Friday, February 3 and Saturday, February 4, 2012

Application packets submitted by the filing deadline will be carefully reviewed to identify those candidates who meet the minimum qualifications for this position. Unfortunately, the City lacks the resources to allow an unlimited number of candidates to participate in the Firefighter selection process. All applications will be screened to ensure candidates meet the minimum qualifications. If that number is approximately 500, all qualified candidates will be invited to take the written examination. If the pool of candidates is larger than 500, the supplemental application will be used to further screen the candidates and a randomized lottery may be used to limit the applicant pool to approximately 500 qualified candidates. Qualified candidates chosen through the lottery will be invited to participate in a written examination, scheduled for **Friday, February 3, 2012 or Saturday, February 4, 2012**. Notices will be sent (via email or paper depending upon candidate preference) to candidates the week of January 23, 2012.

Oral Examination #1

Depending on logistical considerations and the size of the applicant pool, it is possible that only those **candidates earning the highest passing scores on the written examination** will be invited to participate in the first oral examination, which is weighted pass/fail. The first oral examination is tentatively scheduled for the **week of February 27, 2012**. The oral examination #1 will be scheduled between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Candidates who pass the written examination but do not earn an invitation to the first oral examination will remain eligible to participate in a future oral examination if deemed necessary by the City.

Oral Examination #2

Candidates who pass the first oral examination will be invited to participate in the second oral examination, which is weighted 100%. The second oral examination is tentatively scheduled for the **week of March 12, 2012**. The oral examination #2 will be scheduled between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Performance (Physical Ability) Examination

Depending on logistical considerations and the size of the applicant pool, it is possible that only those **candidates earning the highest passing scores on the second oral examination** will be invited to participate in the performance examination, which is weighted pass/fail. The performance examination is tentatively scheduled to begin during the **weekend of March 24, 2012**. The performance (physical ability) examination will be scheduled between 8:00 am – 5:00 pm.

Candidates who pass the second oral examination but do not earn an invitation to the performance examination will remain eligible to participate in a future performance examination if deemed necessary by the City.

Departmental Interviews

Only those **candidates who successfully pass all phases of the selection process will earn placement on the eligible list**, which may be used for current and future vacancies in the job classification during the life of the eligible list. Placement on the eligible list does not guarantee nor imply that a job offer will follow. Certification of eligible candidates will be made each time the Fire Department intends to fill a vacant position. Candidates in the top ten ranks will be certified for one vacant position, with an additional rank certified for each additional vacancy. The fire department anticipates filling approximately 10 vacant positions.

Candidates certified to the Fire Department will be contacted to schedule a departmental interview (Chief's oral interview). The Chief will make selections from this group of candidates. Candidates not immediately selected will remain on the eligible list until its expiration (typically one year) and may be contacted for future vacancies.

Candidates interested in a paramedic assignment will be invited to an additional interview designed to assess Advanced Life Support qualifications. The paramedic interview will not affect candidates' rankings on the Firefighter eligible list.

Final Steps

If given a conditional offer of employment, candidates will be required to pass a background investigation, polygraph, psychological, medical examination, and drug screening prior to appointment.

Firefighter Academy

Candidates hired into the position of Firefighter are tentatively scheduled to begin the Firefighter Academy tentatively scheduled for June 2012. The Academy is expected to last approximately 10 – 12 weeks.

EXAMINATION PREPARATION

General

Before applying for any job, it is wise to research the position and the organization. In addition to reviewing this guide, candidates may find it useful to talk directly with Santa Clara Firefighters and visit the Santa Clara Fire Department website at <http://santaclaraca.gov/index.aspx?page=119>.

Written Examination

The entry-level Firefighter written examination is designed to assess the skills and aptitudes necessary to succeed as a Firefighter. Specifically, the written examination is generally designed to measure the ability to understand and remember written and oral information, perform basic mathematics, and understand mechanical principles and diagrams. The examination will include approximately 100 multiple-choice questions, each with four possible answers. Candidates will be allowed up to two hours to complete the written examination. Calculators will be allowed.

Oral Examination #1 and #2

The first oral examination is a brief panel interview (up to 15 minutes) that is designed to assess the candidates' qualifications in areas such as motivation and preparation for a career in the fire service, understanding of and interest in the position, and personal characteristics.

The second oral examination is a more in-depth panel interview (up to 30 minutes). While this examination may further evaluate the areas assessed in the first oral interview, it is also designed to assess candidates in competencies such as interpersonal skills, oral communication, and analytical skills.

It is to your advantage to listen carefully to the questions asked and completely and directly answer each question. You should be completely honest and provide a clear and concise summary of your qualifications. As with any interview, you should speak clearly and use proper grammar. Since each examination will have a time limit, it will be your responsibility to manage your time effectively.

Performance (Physical Ability) Examination

The performance examination consists of three events: aerial ladder climb, equipment/ladder removal and carry, and emergency response. A brief summary of these events is listed below; more detailed information will be provided at a later date.

In the aerial climb event, candidates will be instructed to climb to the top of an aerial ladder truck where the ladder has been raised to a height of 80 feet, at a 70-degree climbing angle. This event is pass/fail and is not timed.

The equipment/ladder removal and carry event simulates a candidate's ability to remove and replace equipment from an upper compartment of a fire engine and to remove and carry a 24-foot extension ladder a distance of 100 feet. This event is pass/fail and is not timed.

The emergency response event is designed to assess a candidate's ability to perform a series of physically demanding job tasks while wearing a turnout coat, gloves, helmet, safety belt, and self-contained breathing unit. The event contains two components that are intended to simulate required performance under emergency conditions: high-rise response and advance hose/victim rescue. This event is pass/fail with a time limit of 10 minutes and 30 seconds.

Preparation for the performance examination can be accomplished by a physical training program that emphasizes cardio respiratory (heart/lung) fitness, muscular strength, and endurance.

THE DEPARTMENT

The mission of the Santa Clara Fire Department is to protect the citizens of Santa Clara from injury and loss due to natural and man-made disasters. This mission is accomplished by providing highly trained and equipped emergency personnel to respond to incidents of fire, flood, chemical release and medical emergencies within three minutes after notification and by protecting property prior to an emergency with pre-fire planning, fire code inspections, and public education programs in commercial and residential fire safety.

The Santa Clara Fire Department currently consists of approximately 180 employees (including 58 in the classification of Firefighter) and has a budget of approximately \$33.4 million. Ten fire stations serve the City of Santa Clara's 19.3 square miles, including eight Engine Companies, two Truck Companies, one Heavy Rescue Company, three Ambulances, and one Hazardous Materials Unit. Engine and truck companies are assigned one Firefighter, one Driver/Engineer, and one Captain. The Hazardous Material unit and Heavy Rescue Company each have one Driver/Engineer assigned. Ambulances are assigned two Paramedics, who may be any rank. There is one suppression Battalion Chief on duty per shift. Rural Metro Corporation is the contracted ambulance service for Santa Clara County. Each station has a radius of approximately one and a half miles, which helps Santa Clara maintain an outstanding response time.

In 2010, the Santa Clara Fire Department answered 7757 calls for service. Medical/rescue incidents were the most common, with 5362 calls. The Department also responded to 101 chemical spills/leaks, 230 fires, 423 vehicle accidents, and 1641 other emergency incidents and non-emergency events.

For more information on the Santa Clara Fire Department, please visit our website at <http://santaclaraca.gov/index.aspx?page=119>

THE COMMUNITY

The City of Santa Clara is a family oriented and business friendly city in the center of Silicon Valley, located in Santa Clara County at the southern tip of San Francisco Bay, about 45 miles south of San Francisco. The City of Santa Clara is in a strategic regional location convenient to freeways, airports, railroads, expressways, light rail and other public transportation. "The Mission City," as Santa Clara is known, was founded in 1852 and has grown to a community of more than 118,169 residents and an employment base of approximately 135,000. With 19.3 square miles of tree-lined neighborhoods, thriving commercial and industrial centers, and 300 days of sunshine each year, it is an ideal location for individuals, families, and businesses.

Explore California's early Spanish history at Mission Santa Clara de Asis, founded in 1777, on the beautiful campus of Santa Clara University, the State's oldest institution of higher learning. Other points of interest and attractions include Mission College, the 100-acre Great America theme park, an award-winning Santa Clara Convention Center, Triton Museum of Art, the de Saisset Museum, Intel Museum, the headquarters and practice fields of the San Francisco 49ers football team, and numerous shopping opportunities including Westfield Shoppingtown - Valley Fair.

Voted one of ten All-America Cities in the New Millennium by the National Civic League, Santa Clara has a "High Tech, Human Touch, H2"™ approach to serving the community's needs. Santa Clara also offers the region's lowest combined utility costs in the nine Bay Area counties, with savings of 30 to 40% on electricity alone, and it is consistently rated one of the most affordable cities in the nation for business.

Santa Clara is a full-service Charter City with a Council/Manager form of government and an annual budget of approximately \$558.7 million. The City's financial stability ensures the highest levels of citizen and business service, low business taxes and solid real estate value, and it is also one of the safest U.S. cities with a population of 75,000+. Our outstanding public safety record includes the highest fire rating in Santa Clara County and some of the fastest emergency response times in the state.

With a focus on high quality customer services and its reputation, it is no wonder more than 4,500 companies, including many of the world's top technology firms, and thousands of long-time residents have made the City of Santa Clara their home.

GROOMING POLICY

Members of the Santa Clara Fire Department, while in uniform, represent the City of Santa Clara as well as the Fire Department. While on duty, members of the department shall be neat, clean, and maintain a professional appearance at all times.

Please refer to the attached Fire Chief Directive

SANTA CLARA FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE CHIEF'S DIRECTIVES

Personal Appearance and Grooming Policy

Division:	200
Article:	10
Page:	1 of 5
Date:	11/06/95
Originator:	
Rev. Date:	11/21/07
Rev. Originator:	P. Kleinheinz
Next Review:	Uniform Committee - 2013

- I. INTRODUCTION: MEMBERS OF THE SANTA CLARA FIRE DEPARTMENT, WHILE IN UNIFORM, REPRESENT THE CITY OF SANTA CLARA AS WELL AS THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. THIS DIRECTIVE SHALL APPLY TO ALL MEMBERS WHILE WEARING ANY PART OF THE UNIFORM AS LISTED IN FCD 214.**

210.1 Policy

- Item 1. This policy establishes the standard for personal appearance and grooming for uniformed personnel. It recognizes safety concerns as well as physical differences in uniformed personnel while maintaining the high professional image of the Santa Clara Fire Department
- Item 2. While on duty, members of the department shall be neat, clean, and maintain a professional appearance at all times. Uniforms shall be clean, properly maintained, and comply with specifications as outlined in FCD 214. All personnel shall comply with the grooming standards as outlined in this directive.
- Item 3. Those who do not comply shall be directed to do so, by their immediate supervisor, prior to assumption of on-duty status.
- Item 4. Conditions cannot be allowed to develop which would jeopardize personal safety or the safety of others.
- Item 5. Adherence to the letter of this policy does not preclude officers requiring adjustments or modifications when, in their judgment, a safety hazard or recurring grooming problem exists.

210.2 Procedure

- Item 1. Uniformed Personnel: Men
 - (a) Personnel shall be clean-shaven, allowing for sideburns, and moustaches.
 - (b) A moustache is defined as the hair above the upper lip, extending not more than 1-inch past the corners of the mouth in any direction. The moustache shall be neatly trimmed. Any extension beyond the corners of the mouth shall be no wider than the hair above the lip.

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- (c) Sideburns are defined as the extension of the hairline in front of the ears. Sideburns shall not extend beyond the lobe of the ear and shall be no wider than 1-1/2 inches.
- (d) Hair shall not interfere with vision. Hair shall not extend beyond the bottom of the Class B uniform shirt collar, and not be such a length or bulk as to require wrapping or tying in order to be contained within the helmet.
- (e) In no event shall the length of the hair or the style preclude the proper wearing of the uniform hat and/or the safe and proper wearing of the helmet, PBI hood or self-contained breathing apparatus.
- (f) Hair may be braided, provided it is neat and the length does not extend beyond the bottom of the Class B uniform shirt collar. Braided hairstyles shall be conservative and conform to the guidelines listed herein. When a hairstyle of multiple braids is worn, braids shall be of uniform dimension, small in diameter (approx. 3/8 inch), and tightly interwoven to present a neat, professional, well-groomed appearance. Foreign material (i.e. beads, decorative items) shall not be braided into the hair. Short hair may be braided symmetrically, front to back, which minimizes scalp exposure. Braided ends shall not protrude outward from the head, and shall be secured only with inconspicuous rubber bands that match the color of the hair.
- (g) The coloring of hair, including wigs, hairpieces and facial hair, shall be limited to natural hair colors. Subtle and balanced highlights using natural hair colors are acceptable. Hairstyles shall not be outrageously multi-colored or faddish, or have designs cut, shaved, braided, or colored into the hair. Haircuts and styles shall present a balanced appearance. Lopsided and extremely asymmetrical styles are not permitted.
- (h) Jewelry, such as bracelets or earrings, will not be allowed. Appropriate neck chains may be worn as long as they are covered and contained within the uniform at all times. Rings are not recommended, but may be worn as long as they are covered when working around machinery, etc. Watches will be allowed, but it is recommended that expansion or "break away" bands be worn.
- (i) Painted or decorated fingernails are not permitted.

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Item 2. Uniformed Personnel - Women

- (a) Women Firefighters may have longer hairstyles as long as the hair is braided or restrained. Under no conditions shall hair be allowed to drop below the bottom of the Class B uniform shirt collar during normal duties, activities, or while in view of the public.
- (b) Hair shall not interfere with vision. Hair shall be styled or restrained at all times and shall not cause a delay in emergency response or performance of other duties. All hair shall be contained within the helmet.
- (c) In no event shall the length of the hair or the style preclude the proper wearing of the uniform hat and/or the safe and proper wearing of the helmet, PBI hood or self-contained breathing apparatus.
- (d) Hair may be braided, provided it is neat and the length does not extend beyond the bottom of the Class B uniform shirt collar. Braided hairstyles shall be conservative and conform to the guidelines listed herein. When a hairstyle of multiple braids is worn, braids shall be of uniform dimension, small in diameter (approx. 3/8 inch), and tightly interwoven to present a neat, professional, well-groomed appearance. Foreign material (i.e. beads, decorative items) shall not be braided into the hair. Short hair may be braided symmetrically, front to back, which minimizes scalp exposure. Braided ends shall not protrude outward from the head, and shall be secured only with inconspicuous rubber bands that match the color of the hair.
- (e) The coloring of hair, including wigs and hairpieces, shall be limited to natural hair colors. Subtle and balanced highlights using natural hair colors are acceptable. Hairstyles shall not be outrageously multi-colored or faddish, or have designs cut, shaved, braided, or colored into the hair. Haircuts and styles shall present a balanced appearance. Lopsided and extremely asymmetrical styles are not permitted.
- (f) Cosmetics will be conservative and in good taste, so that colors blend with the natural skin tone. Nail polish is allowed and shall be a single color, or French manicure. Personnel will not wear shades of nail polish that distinctly contrast with their complexion, that detract from the uniform, or that are extreme. Some examples of extreme colors include but are not limited to, purple, gold, blue, black, neon/fluorescent. Decorations to the fingernail are not allowed.

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- (g) Jewelry, such as bracelets or earrings will not be allowed. Appropriate neck chains may be worn as long as they are covered and contained within the uniform at all times. Rings are not recommended, but may be worn as long as they are covered when working around machinery, etc. Watches will be allowed, but it is recommended that expansion or "break away" bands be worn.

Item 3. Tattoos/Brands – All Personnel

- (a) Tattoos/brands are permissible as long as they are not visible while wearing any approved Santa Clara Fire Department class of uniform, i.e., Class A, B, C or D. Tattoos/brands located above the clavicles are prohibited. *All tattoos/brands must be completely covered at all times while on duty, with the exception of Item (c) below. While in Class D uniform, personnel may wear the approved sweatpants to conceal tattoos/brands on the lower extremities.
- (b) Any tattoo/brand that is obscene or vulgar or advocates sexual, racial, ethnic, gender or religious discrimination is prohibited. Tattoos/brands that are prejudicial to good order and discipline or of a nature that tends to bring discredit upon the Santa Clara Fire Department are also prohibited.
- (c) An exception will be made for employees who had existing tattoos/brands prior to January 1, 2007 that are visible while wearing the Class D uniform (shorts, t-shirt). Personnel who meet the requirements of the aforementioned date will be allowed to wear the Class D uniform (shorts, t-shirt), in accordance with the uniform policy as outlined in FCD 214.
- (d) Employees with pre-existing tattoos/brands prior to the implementation date of this policy are not allowed to add new tattoos/brands that are visible while in Department uniform.
- (e) Any tattoo/brand obtained by any employee after the implementation of this policy is prohibited from being visible in any class of Santa Clara Fire Department uniform.

Item 4. *See following scenarios for further clarification:

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- Item 5. Scenarios: Existing Tattoo/Brand before 1/01/07 New Tattoo/Brand After 10/15/07
- Item 6. Tattoos/brands visible while wearing the Department short-sleeve t-shirt: Allowed
Not Allowed
- Item 7. Tattoos/brands visible while wearing the Department shorts: Allowed Not Allowed
- Item 8. Tattoos/brands visible above the clavicles: Not Allowed Not Allowed
- Item 9. Body Piercing – All Personnel
- (a) Personnel are prohibited from attaching, affixing or displaying objects, articles, jewelry or ornamentation to or through the ear, nose, tongue, eye brows, lips, or any exposed body part while on duty, and/or wearing any Department uniform, (this includes any item visible through the Department uniform).
 - (b) Piercing, branding or intentional scarring that is excessive or eccentric is prohibited. Some examples include:
 - (1) Foreign objects inserted under the skin to create a design or pattern;
 - (2) Enlarged or stretched holes in the ears (other than normal piercing);
 - (3) Intentional scarring that appears on the neck, face, scalp, or any other exposed part of the body.